

## Sūrah Faṭīr (Creator/Originator)

Sūrah Faṭīr was revealed at Makkah and it has 45 verses and 5 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

### Verses 1 - 3

الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا اُولٰٓئِ  
اَجْنِحَةً مَّثْنٰی وَثُلٰثَ وَرُبْعًا ۗ يَزِيْدُ فِى الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَآءُ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى  
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١﴾ مَا يَفْتَحِ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكٍ لَهَا  
وَمَا يُمْسِكُ ۗ فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهٗ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢﴾ يَاۤاَيُّهَا  
النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ هَلْ مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرِ اللّٰهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ  
مِّنَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۗ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۗ فَانظُرُوْا ۗ تُوَفَّقُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾

All praise belongs to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, who makes the angels messengers having wings, in twos, threes and fours. He adds to the creation what He wills. Indeed, Allah is powerful to do every thing. [1] Whatever blessing Allah opens for the people, there is none to hold it back, and whatever He holds back, there is none to release it thereafter. And He is the Mighty, the Wise. [2] O mankind, remember Allah's blessing upon you. Is there any creator other than Allah who gives you provision from the sky and the earth? There is no god, but He. So, to where are you being turned around (by your desires)? [3]

### Commentary

As for the statement: *جَاعِلِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا* (who makes the angels messengers), it means that angels were assigned to convey the messages and injunctions of Allah Ta'ālā. From this, it is obvious that they are sent to the noble prophets عليهم السلام as the message-bearers or envoys of Allah. They convey the revelations and the injunctions of Allah to them. And it is also possible that the word: رسول (Rasūl) used here may be denoting the sense of link at this place, that is, they become a link between Allah Ta'ālā and His universal creation out of which the noble prophets عليهم السلام are the superior-most. Thus, they also become an intermediary link for the transmittal of revelation from Allah Ta'ālā to them. Then, these very angels happen to be the means of bringing the mercy of Allah or His punishment to the universal creation.

The next statement: *أُولٰٓئِىۤا أَجْنِحَةً مَّثْنٰٓى وَثُلٰٓثَ وَرُبٰٓعَ* (having wings, in twos and threes and fours) means that Allah Ta'ālā has given to the angels feathered wings they can fly with. The wise consideration behind it is obvious as they traverse the distance between the heavens and the earth repeatedly, and this can become possible only when they are endowed with the necessary speed to so traverse, something that can come about in the mode of flying only:

And the words: *مَّثْنٰٓى وَثُلٰٓثَ وَرُبٰٓعَ* (in twos and threes and fours) are, evidently enough, numerical adjectives referring to: *أَجْنِحَةً* (wings) in the sense that the number of the feathers angels have varies from angel to angel. Some have only two wings. Others have three. Still others have four. Even the numbers mentioned here are not comprehensive, rather they are mentioned here just as an example, because it is proved by a Ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام, has six hundred feathers. (Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr)

Moreover, it is also possible that these three words are numerical adjectives referring to the word: *رُسُلًا* (rusulan: bearers of the message) in the sense that these angels who deliver messages from Allah Ta'ālā to this world sometimes come in twos and at others in threes or fours. Once again, in this situation too, the number of four is not intended for restriction. It is there just for example because the coming of angels in a much larger number stands proved from the Qur'an itself. (Abū Ḥayyan in al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ)

The next sentence: *يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ* (He adds to the creation what He wills) means that Allah Ta'ālā has the power to increase whatever He wills and as much as He wills in the creation of everything He has originated. This obviously is related to: *أَجْنِحَةٌ* (ajnihah: wings) in that the feathers and wings of the angels are not something simply restricted to two or four in numbers, for they could be many more than these if Allah Ta'ālā so wills. Most commentators say exactly this. And Tafsīr authorities Zuhri, Qatadah and others have said that this increase in creation is to be taken in its general sense which includes increase in the feathers and wings of angels as well as the increase of particular attributes in the creation of different human beings which, then, includes the beauty of form, the beauty of character, the beauty of voice and many more increased assets like these. Abū Ḥayyan has, in *al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ*, followed this track of explanation and said that things like good manners, beauty of figure and face, perfection of reason and intellect, politeness in discourse and similar others are all included therein. This second Tafsīr proves that the beauty or perfection of anything one has is invariably a gift and blessing from Allah Ta'ālā for which one should be grateful to Him.

The word: *رَحْمَةٌ* (*rahmah*: mercy) appearing in verse 2: *مَا يَفْتَحِ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا* (Whatever blessing Allah opens for the people, there is none to hold it back,) is general at this place. It includes blessings of one's religion in this world along with those of the Hereafter, such as, faith, knowledge, rightly guided conduct as well as the mission of a prophet and the station of a Waliyy or man of Allah. And it also includes material blessings in the present world, such as, provisions, means, comfort, health, wealth, property, recognition and things like that. The meaning of the verse is quite obvious. It is being said here that the person for whom Allah Ta'ālā intends to open the doors of His mercy, there is no one who can stop it.

Similarly, the second sentence: *وَمَا يُمْسِكُ* (*wa ma yumsik*: there is none to hold it back) is general, meaning: what Allah Ta'ālā holds back cannot be released by anyone. This includes hardships and sorrows of the world. For example, when Allah intends to shield some servant of His from these, then, there is no one who can dare harass or harm him. And included here is the matter of mercy as well in the sense that, should Allah Ta'ālā

decide to deprive a person of His mercy due to some wise consideration of His, then, there is no one who can dare pass it on to him. (Abū Ḥayyan)

Related to this very subject of the verse, there is a Ḥadīth that reports that Sayyidnā Mu‘awiyah رضي الله عنه wrote to Sayyidnā Mughirah Ibn Shu‘abah رضي الله عنه, his governor at Kufah, asking him to send back to him in writing some Ḥadīth he had personally heard from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidnā Mughirah رضي الله عنه called Rawwad, his chief scribe, in his office and dictated his report as: 'I heard from the Holy Prophet ﷺ soon after he finished his salah his recitation of the words: *لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا أُعْطِيَ وَلَا مُعْطِيَ لِمَا* اللَّهُمَّ لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا أُعْطِيَ وَلَا مُعْطِيَ لِمَا مَنَعْتَ وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ الْجَدُّ (O Allah, for that which You give, there is no one to stop, and for that which you hold back, there is no one to give it out, and no effort<sup>1</sup> by any maker of effort works against Your will'). (Ibn Kathīr from the Musnad of Aḥmad)

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, he said these words at the time he raised his head from the (bending) position of *ruku‘* before another sentence: *أَحَقُّ مَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ وَكُنَّا نَكَ* (that is, these words, out of all that a servant of Allah can say, are the most true, incumbent and superior).

### Trust in Allah delivers from all hardships

The lesson taught by the cited verse (2) to all human beings is that one should not hope any benefit or fear any harm from anyone other than Allah, instead, one should keep his or her sight trained towards Allah alone. This is the master prescription for a better life in this world as well as in the life to come. This simple antidote delivers one from thousands of anxieties and sorrows. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī)

Sayyidnā ‘Amir Ibn ‘Abd Qays رضي الله عنه said: Once I get to recite four verses of the noble Qur‘ān in the morning, I stop worrying about what would happen in the morning and what would happen in the evening. These verses are as follows. The first one is this very verse under study: *مَا يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ* مَا يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا وَمَا يُمْسِكُ فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ (Whatever blessing Allah opens for the people, there is none to hold it back, and whatever He holds back, there is none to release it thereafter - 35:2). The second verse

[1] This translation is based on one way of reading this prayer, that is, jidd (with kasrah on the letter jim, but if it is read as jadd, the the correct translation would be: 'no high status of a person may benefit him against Your decree.

having the same sense appears in Sūrah al-An'ām, 6:17: *إِنْ يَمْسَسْكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا فَاةَ لَهُ، إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ* (And if Allah causes you some harm, no one is there to remove it except He Himself; and if He causes you some good, then He is powerful over everything - 6:17). The third verse is from Sūrah At-Ṭālaq, 65:7: *سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا* (Allah will soon bring ease after a difficulty). The fourth verse is from Sūrah Hūd, 11:6: *وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا* (And there is no creature on earth whose sustenance is not on Allah - 11:6). (Narrated by Ibn al-Mundhir, as in Ruḥ ul-Ma'ani)

And when Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه saw rain falling, he used to say: *مُطِرْنَا بِنِوَاءِ الْفَتْحِ* (The rain has come upon us through the rise of fath: (the opening) and would, then, recite the verse: *مَا يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ* (Whatever blessing Allah opens for the people, there is none to hold it back,- 34:2). This term of 'rise of fath' used by him was in rebuttal of the false notion prevailing among Arabs of those days who used to attribute the coming of rains to the rise of particular stars and said that the rains had come upon them through the rise of such and such star. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه countered it by saying that (the mercy of) rains came to him through (the statement in) the verse of fath or opening. By this, he meant this very verse quoted above. He used to recite it particularly on such occasions. (Reported by Imām Mālik in al-Mu'waṭṭā)

### Verses 4 - 8

وَأَنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ  
 ﴿٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَلَا  
 يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْعُرُورُ ۗ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا ۗ  
 إِنَّمَا يَدْعُوا حِزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
 لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ  
 وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧﴾ أَفَمَنْ زِينَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا ۗ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
 يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ  
 حَسْرَةً ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٨﴾

And if they reject you,( it is not something new, because) many messengers have been rejected before you. And to Allah all matters are to be returned. [4] O mankind, Allah's promise is definitely true, therefore, the worldly life must not deceive you, nor should you be deceived about Allah by the big deceiver (Satan). [5] Surely Satan is an enemy for you. So, take him as an enemy. He invites his group only to cause them to be among the people of blazing fire. [6] Those who disbelieve will have a severe punishment; and those who believe and do righteous deeds will have forgiveness and a great reward. [7] Is it, then, that the one whose evil deed has been made attractive to him so much that he deems it to be good (will be held equal to him who differentiates between right and wrong) ? The fact, therefore, is that Allah lets go astray whomsoever He wills , and leads to the right path whomsoever He wills. So, let not your soul collapse in grief for them. Surely Allah fully knows what they are doing. [8]

### Commentary

The word: غَرُور (gharur) is an emphatic form of an adjective that means one who is very deceiving (hence, rendered here as 'big deceiver'). It refers to the Shaitan (Satan) whose sole job is to deceive people and throw them into disbelief and sin. And the expression: لَا يُغَيِّرَنَّكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْعُرُورُ (5) means 'nor should you be deceived about Allah'. To explain this deception, it can be said that the Shaitan may not, by showing your evil deeds as good, cause you to become so involved with these that you reach the stage when you go on committing a sin and, at the same time, keep thinking that you are of those accepted in the sight of Allah, and that you will not have to undergo any punishment.' (Qurṭubī)

Imām al-Baghawī has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that the verse: فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ (The fact, therefore, is that Allah lets go astray whomsoever He wills , and leads to the right path whomsoever He wills.- 8) was revealed at a time when the Holy Prophet ﷺ had made the prayer: 'O Allah, bless Islam with prestige and power, through 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, or Abū Jahl.' Out of the two, Allah Ta'ālā showed the right path to Sayyidnā 'Umar and made him the cause of Islam's prestige and power, while Abū Jahl remained as astray as he was. (Maḥzarī)

## Verses 9 - 14

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَهُ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ مَيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَا  
 بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۗ كَذَلِكَ النُّشُورُ ﴿٩﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ  
 فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا ۗ إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ  
 يَرْفَعُهُ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ يَمْكُرُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۗ وَمَكْرُ  
 أُولَئِكَ هُوَ يَبُورُ ﴿١٠﴾ وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ  
 جَعَلَكُمْ أَرْوَاجًا ۗ وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَىٰ وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ ۗ وَمَا  
 يُعْمَرُ مِنْ مُعَمَّرٍ وَلَا يُنْقِصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَىٰ  
 اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَانِ ۗ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ  
 شَرَابُهُ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ ۗ وَمِنْ كُلِّ تَاكُلُونَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا  
 وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ حَلِيَّةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا ۗ وَتَرَىٰ الْفُلْكَ فِيهِ مَوَآخِرَ لِيَتَبَتَّغُوا  
 مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ يُوَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوَلِّجُ  
 النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ ۗ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۗ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ  
 مُسَمًّى ۗ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا  
 يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دَعَاءَكُمْ ۗ وَلَوْ  
 سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ ۗ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ ۗ وَلَا  
 يُنَبِّئُكَ مِثْلُ خَبِيرٍ ﴿١٤﴾

And Allah is the One who sends the winds, then they raise up the clouds, then We drive them to a dead land and revive the land through them after its death. In similar way shall be the resurrection. [9] Whoever desires honor, then all honor lies with Allah alone. Towards Him ascends the pure word, and the righteous deed uplifts it. As for those who plot evils, for them there is a severe punishment, and their plot itself will perish. [10] And Allah has created you from dust, then

from a drop of semen, then He made you couples. And no female conceives nor gives birth without His knowledge. And no aged person is made to advance in age, nor a part is curtailed from his age, but all this is (recorded) in a book. Surely all this is easy for Allah. [11] And two seas are not alike; this one is sweet, saturating, pleasant to drink, and that one is saltish, bitter. And from each, you eat fresh meat, and derive ornaments that you wear. And you see the boats therein cleaving through water, so that you may search for His grace, and that you may be grateful. [12] He makes the night enter into the day and makes the day enter into the night, and He has subjugated the sun and the moon; each one of them is running towards an appointed time. That is Allah, your Lord. To Him belongs the kingdom. And those whom you invoke beside Him do not own even the membrane on a date-stone. [13] If you call them, they do not hear your call, and even if they were to hear, they would not respond to you. And on the Day of Judgment they will deny your having held them as Allah's partners. and none can inform you like Him who is Aware. [14]

### Commentary

In verse 10, it was said: **إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ** (Towards Him ascends the pure word, and the righteous deed uplifts it). Immediately earlier to this, it was declared that the person seeking honor and power should understand that these matters are not controlled by anyone other than Allah. As for those who have taken certain things as objects of worship or have taken some people as friends in the hope of being honored by them, they cannot give honor to anyone. Given in the present verse, there is a method of acquiring the gifts of grace and honor from Allah Ta'ālā. It has two parts: (1) Good word (that is, the kalimah of tauhid: la ilaha il-lal-lah) and the knowledge of the being and attributes of Allah. (2) Good deed, that is, to believe by heart and then act in accordance with its dictates under the Sharī'ah. Shah 'Abdul Qadir رحمه الله تعالى has said in Mudih-ul-Qur'an that this prescription of becoming a recipient of honor is perfectly true and tested, however, the condition is that one remains constant in remembering Allah and doing good deeds. When this constancy reaches an appointed limit, Allah Ta'ālā blesses the doer of these with an everlasting and unparalleled honor both in this world and in the world to come.



These two parts have been expressed in the cited verse by saying that good word ascends towards Allah and reaches Him while good deed uplifts it and makes it reach Him. In the grammatical arrangement of: *الْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ* (the good deed uplifts it) there are certain probabilities. The meanings of the sentence change in terms of each such probability. Authorities in Tafsīr have explained it in line with the respective probabilities that they have deemed to be appropriate by them. According to the first probability, the subjective pronoun in: *يَرْفَعُهُ* (uplifts) should be taken as reverting to: ... (the good deed) and the objective pronoun (it) to: ... (good word) meaning: 'good words ascend to Allah, but the thing through which they are made to ascend are good deeds (as in the khulasa-e-Tafsīr of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi). The majority of Tafsīr authorities - Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Jubayr, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Mujahid, Dahhak, Shahr Ibn Hawshab and others - have opted for this very approach. And the sense of ascending to and being helped to ascend is being accepted in the sight of Allah, therefore, the gist of the sentence would be that good word, be it the kalimah of tauhid or others words of the remembrance and glorification of Allah, nothing of it gets to be acceptable with Allah without good deed. Here, the confirmation by heart is an integral part of good deed the most important part of which is the belief by heart in His Oneness. This belief by heart is a necessary condition for the acceptance of deeds in the absolute sense. Without it, neither the Kalimah: *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* (*la ilaha il-lal-lah*) nor any other Dhikr of Allah is acceptable.

Then, there are the other parts of good deed, such as, prayers and fasting and abstinence from forbidden and reprehensible things. Though, the acceptability of the 'good word', that is, the kalimah of tauhid does not depend on such good deeds, yet these deeds too are conditions to a perfect acceptability of the 'good words'. If a person simply does not have faith, and its confirmation, in his heart, then, no matter how many times he repeats the words of the cardinal statement of one's Islam (Kalimah Tauḥīd: *la ilaha il-lal-lah*) and remains engaged with dhikr and Tasbiḥ of Allah, he will not deserve the least of acceptability in the sight of Allah. In contrast, there is the case of the other person who does have faith and its confirmation, but fails to do other good deeds or falls short in them, then, his saying of the kalimah of tauhid and the doing of the dhikr of

Allah will, though, not go to waste totally, however, its benefit will be restricted to delivering him from the everlasting punishment. The consequence will be that he will go through a certain punishment for some time that will be in proportion to his abandonment of duty and the shortcoming.

In a Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, 'Allah Ta'ālā does not accept any word without deed, and any word and deed without the intention, and any word, deed and intention without compatibility with sunnah (as said and done by him).' (Qurṭubī)

This tells us that correspondence with sunnah is the condition of perfect acceptability. Even if the word, the deed and the intention, all these, are also correct but the mode and method of conduct is not in accordance with sunnah, then, one cannot become a recipient of perfect acceptability with Allah.

Some commentators suggest another syntactical arrangement in respect of this sentence. According to them, the subjective pronoun in: *يُرْفَعُهُ* (uplifts) reverts to: *ضمير فاعل* (good word) and the objective pronoun (i.e. 'it') to: *كلم طيب* (good deed). Thus, the meaning of the sentence become totally different from that of the earlier, that is, 'good word' which is the dhikr of Allah, makes 'good deed' ascend and makes it rise higher up, that is, makes it worthy of being accepted. The outcome would then be that a person who does good deeds, and along with it, also does his dhikr of Allah abundantly, then, this dhikr of Allah embellishes his deed and makes it acceptable.

The sense of the verse: *وَمَا يُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُعَمَّرٍ وَلَا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمرَةٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ* (And no aged person is made to advance in age, nor a part is curtailed from his age, but all this is (recorded) in a book - 35:11), according to the majority of the commentators is that if Allah Ta'ālā blesses a person with a long age, it is a fact already on record in the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*). Similarly, when the age of a certain person is kept at a lower mark in terms of the number of years, that too already stands recorded in *al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*. The outcome of it all is that the text, at this place, is not referring to one individual person's age being long or short, instead, the statement relates to humankind as a whole, in the sense that some individuals from it are given long ages and others, a comparatively

shorter ones. The explanation has been reported by Ibn Kathīr from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه. Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ reports the same saying from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Daḥḥak. Therefore, in general books of Tafsīr, such as, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathīr, Rāḥ ul-Ma‘ānī and others, this very explanation has been declared as the view of the majority of commentators. However, some early commentators have said: Should the length of age concerns one single person, then, decrease in age would mean that the age of every person as already written by Allah Ta‘ālā is certain, and every day that passes decreases one day from this pre-fixed age. If two days pass, two days decrease. In the same way, every day, in fact, every single breath keeps decreasing one's age. This Tafsīr or explanation has been reported from Sha‘bi, Ibn Jubayr, Abū Mālīk, Ibn ‘Atiyyah and Suddiyy. (Rūḥ ul-Ma‘ānī)

This subject has been succinctly expressed in an Arabic couplet as:

حَيَاتِكَ أَنْفَاسٌ تُعَدُّ فَكُلَّمَا.....☆..... مَضَى نَفْسٌ مِنْهَا انْتَقَصَتْ بِهِ جُزْءٌ

Your life is (the name of) counted breaths. So, whenever passes away a breath from it, a part of it decreases.

In his explanation of this verse, Imām an-Nasa‘ī has reported from Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه that he heard the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saying, "مَنْ سَرَّهُ، أَنْ يُسَاطَ لَهُ، فِي رِزْقِهِ وَوَيْسَاءَ فِي آثَرِهِ فَلْيَبْصُلْ رَجْمَهُ" This Ḥadīth has also been reported by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abū Dāwūd on the authority of a narration from Yūnus Ibn Yazid Ayli. The Ḥadīth means: 'He who wishes that his sustenance and age is increased should treat his close relatives well (*Ṣilatu-r-rahim*).' This obviously suggests that the these deeds increase one's age. But, another Ḥadīth given below has itself clarified its sense:

Ibn Abī Ḥatim reports from Sayyidnā Abū-d-Darda' رضي الله عنه. He says, 'when we mentioned this (subject) before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, he said, "(Age as such is already fixed and determined by Allah), when the fixed term is over, no one is given the least respite. In fact, increase in age means ( in the Ḥadīth cited above) that Allah Ta‘ālā blesses one with good children who keep praying for him. This person is not there anymore, but he keeps receiving their prayers in his grave (that is, he keeps on receiving the benefits one would have received if one were alive. Thus, in a way, his age has increased)". (Both narrations appearing above have been

reported by Ibn Kathīr). In short, Aḥādīth that say that some deeds cause age to increase mean increase in the barakah or bliss of age.

In the next verse: *وَمِنْ كُلِّ تَاكُلُونَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا* (And from each, you eat fresh meat, and derive ornaments that you wear - 35:12), it is being said that one gets fresh meat, that is, fish to eat from both waters, sweet or brackish. In this verse, by alluding to fish as meat, the hint released is that fish is meat, already halal by itself. One does not have to slaughter it. This is contrary to the case of the animals found on land. Unless one slaughters them with the name of Allah, they do not become halal. Fish does not have this condition. It is meat, ready to eat. And the word: *حِلْيَةً* (*hilyah*) means ornament and refers to pearls. The verse tells us that the way pearls are found in brackish waters, they are also found in sweet waters, something contrary to the general belief, since it is well known that pearls are harvested from the brackish water of the seas. However, the reality is what is evident from the words of the Qur'ān that they form in both - yes, much less in sweet waters and far more in the brackish waters of the sea. That they are found in seas excessively contributed to the popular belief that pearls come only from brackish waters.

By using the masculine form in the last word: *تَلْبَسُونَهَا* (*talbasunaha*: that you wear), a hint is being released that the use of pearls is permissible for men as well - contrary to gold and silver, the use of which as an ornament is not permissible for men. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

In the last verse: *إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دَعَاءَكُمْ وَكَو سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ* (If you call them, they do not hear your call, and even if they were to hear, they would not respond to you. - 35:14). To explain, it can be said that if you call those idols or some prophets or angels you take as god and worship them asking them to help you in distress, they will, first of all, be unable to listen to you because idols do not have the ability to listen. Though, prophets and angels have this ability, yet they are not present everywhere nor do they hear that which is said by everybody. Further on, it was said that, should they, as a matter of supposition, be able to listen, as in the case of angels and prophets, still, they would not fulfill your request, because they themselves have no control over it, and cannot intercede with Allah on behalf of anyone without His permission.

The issue of the ability of the dead to hear (سمع الموتي: sama‘-ul-mawtā) has appeared earlier. The present verse neither confirms nor rejects it. Arguments and proofs relating to this issue are different. They have already been mentioned in details under the commentary on Sūrah Ar-Rūm [30] (Ma‘ariful-Qur‘ān, Volume VI).

## Verses 15 - 26

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿١٥﴾ إِنْ يَشَاءُ يُدْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى ۗ وَإِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ حِمْلِهَا لَا يُحْمَلْ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۗ إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۗ وَمَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّىٰ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَا الظُّلُمَاتُ وَلَا النُّورُ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُورُ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّنْ فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنْ أَنْتَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۗ وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَبِالزُّبُرِ وَبِالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿٢٦﴾

O men, you are the ones who need Allah, and Allah is the Need-Free, the Ever-Praised. [15] If He so wills, He can do away with you and bring a new creation. [16] And for Allah, that is not something difficult. [17] And no bearer will bear the burden of any other person. And if a person carrying a heavy load calls (someone) to (share) his load, nothing from it shall be carried ( by the latter ), even though he be a near of kin. You can

warn only those who fear their Lord unseen and establish salah. And whoever gets purified gets purified for his own benefit. And to Allah is the final return. [18] And the blind and the sighted are not equal, [19] nor darkness and light, [20] nor shade and heat of the sun. [21] And the living and the dead are not alike. Allah makes hear whomsoever He wills. And you cannot make hear those who are in the graves. [22] You are but a warner. [23] Surely We have sent you with truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner, and there was no community without a warner having passed among them. [24] And if they reject you, ( it is not something new, because ) those before them have (also) rejected (messengers). Their messengers came to them with clear proofs and with scriptures and with the enlightening book. [25] Then I seized those who disbelieved. So, how was My censure ! [26]

### Commentary

Verse 18: وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى (And no bearer will bear the burden of any other person) means that, on the Day of Judgment, no one will be able to bear the burden of another person's sins. Everyone will have to bear his or her burden. As for what appears in Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt (29:13): **أَتَقَالَهُمْ** **وَأَتَقَالَا مَعَ أَتَقَالِهِمْ**, which means that people who make others go astray will not only bear the burden of going astray personally, but will also bear the burden of having made others go astray. it does not mean that they will somehow lighten the burden of those they had caused to go astray. Instead, their burden will weigh on them as it was in its own place and because of the crime of those who made people go astray, being twofold, their burden too will become twofold, one: that of being astray and two: that of making others go astray. Therefore, there is no contradiction in these two verses. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

Explaining this verse, Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah رضي الله عنه said: On that Day, a father would say to his son, 'You know how affectionate a father I was to you?' He will say, 'yes, your favors to me are countless. You have certainly faced many a hardship for me during the life of the world.' Then, the father will say, 'son, today I need you. Give me some of your good deeds, so that I can have my salvation.' The son will say, 'father, the return you asked for is not much, but what can I do? If I were to give that to you, I shall be facing the same situation that you are facing now,

therefore, I am sorry, I cannot help you.' Then, he will say the same thing to his wife, 'I sacrificed everything for you during the life of the world. Today, I need a few of your good deeds. Please give these to me.' The wife will give him the same answer as was given by the son.

Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah رضي الله عنه said that this is what the verse: لَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى (And no bearer will bear the burden of any other) means. Then he said that the noble Qur'an has taken up this subject in several of its verses. At one place, it has said: لَا يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَارٌ عَنْ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا that is, on that Day, neither a father would be able to have his son be spared from the punishment, nor would a son be able to do that for his father (31:33). The essential sense is that no one will save another person by carrying the burden of his sins over one's own shoulders. However, the matter of intercession (*shafa'ah*) is different. Similarly, in another verse, it was said: يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ (80:34,35). The purpose of running is no other but that he would be in fear, lest these people try to pass on the burden of their sins on him or come up with a request for some of his good deeds. (Ibn Kathīr)

At the beginning of the verse: وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَنَ فِي الْقُبُورِ (And you cannot make hear those who are in the graves - 22.), disbelievers have been likened to the dead and believers, to the living. In congruence to this, the expression: مَنَ فِي الْقُبُورِ (those in the graves) here means the disbelievers. The sense is that 'the way you cannot make the dead hear you, you can also not make these living disbelievers hear you.'

This verse has itself clarified it that, at this place, making someone hear means the kind of listening that is going to be useful, effective and beneficial. Otherwise, the effort to make disbelievers listen, in the absolute sense, has remained an exercise in futility since ever. It has even been a matter of common observation that a call was beamed at them, and they did listen to it. Therefore, the verse means that 'the way you cannot bring the dead to the right path by making them hear the Divine Word because they have shifted from the avenue of deeds in the world to the arena of recompense in the Hereafter where, even if they confess to their faith, it will not be deemed as trustworthy, similar to that is the condition of the disbelievers. This proves that the negation of making the dead hear referred to in this verse means a particular listening that is

beneficial, something because of which the listener forsakes the false and takes to the true. From this presentation, it becomes clear that the present verse has nothing to do with the issue of the ability of the dead to hear. Whether or not the dead hear the living is a different issue in its own place. A detailed discussion about it has appeared in the commentary on Sūrah Ar-Rūm and Sūrah An-Naml (Ma'āriful-Qur'ān, Volume VI).

### Verses 27 - 28

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً ۖ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا  
 أَلْوَانَهَا ۗ وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيْضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا  
 وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالدَّوَابِّ وَأَلْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ  
 أَلْوَانُهُ، كَذَلِكَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ  
 غَفُورٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

Did you not see that Allah has sent down water from the sky? Then We brought forth with it fruits having different colors. And among the mountains there are tracks, white and red-- of different colors, and ( others) utterly black. [27] And among humans and beasts and cattle, there are those having different colors as well. Only those of His slaves fear Allah who are knowledgeable. Surely Allah is Mighty, Forgiving. [28]

### Commentary

#### Sequence of the Verses

Some early commentators have said that these verses return to the subject of Tauḥīd, Oneness of Allah or pure monotheism supported by proofs of Divine power and mastery in nature. Some others have said that described in the previous verses were different states of people along with examples, such as: وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ وَلَا الظُّلُمَةُ وَلَا النُّورُ وَلَا الظُّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُّورُ (And the blind and the sighted are not equal, (35:19) nor darkness and light, nor shade and heat of the sun - 35:20). What is being said here further clarifies that mutual difference in Divine creations is something inherent. It exists even in organic and inorganic substances, in fact, it is present not only in shapes and colors, but in traits and temperaments as well.



### A subtle grammatical point

The Holy Qur'ān has mentioned different colors of fruits at the first place in Verse 27, and of the mountains at the second place. But the grammatic style is different in both places. With regard to fruits the difference of colors is mentioned by an adverbial phrase (translated above as 'having different cobblers', while in the case of mountains, it has been expressed by an adjectival phrase (translated above as 'of different cobblers'. According to the Arabic grammar, an adjective normally refers to the permanent quality of a thing, while an adverb may refer to a quality or condition that is subject to change. Keeping this in view, there may be a hint here to the effect that the difference of colors in fruits does not remain constant in a single state, rather keeps changing after brief intervals. On the contrary, there are the colors of human beings and other life forms. These are generally fast and abiding, and do not change.

And in case of mountains, used there was the word: جُدَدٌ (*judad*). This is the plural form of: جُدَّةٌ (*juddah*) the well-recognized meaning of which is that of a mini pathway also known as: جَادَةٌ (*jadah*). Some respected elders have taken juddah in the sense of a tract, patch or segment that, in both situations, denotes parts of the mountains being different in colors. Out of these, white was mentioned first while black, last. In between, along with the mention of red, the expression: مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ (of different colors) was introduced. This could be releasing a hint that, in reality, the colors in this world are no more than two - white and black. The rest of the colors in the spectrum emerge by compounding different degrees of white and black.

The place where the word: كَذَٰلِكَ (*kadhalik*: translated above by the words, 'as well') appears in verse 28 just before: كَذَٰلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ (Only those of His slaves fear Allah who are knowledgeable), but in the translation above it has been separated from the next verse by a full stop, because this is the place of a stop (*waqf*) according to the consensus of the majority of commentators and scholars. As such, it is a sign denoting that this word is related to the previous subject, that is, the creation of all that exists in categories and kinds and different colors is a very special sign of the power and wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā.

Then there are narrations that suggest that this word is related to the

next sentence. If this interpretation is adopted, the full stop would be appropriate after the words, 'having different colors, and the word 'kadhalika' should be translated as 'similarly' in which case, it would mean that 'the way fruits, mountains, human beings and other life forms are marked out by different colors, similarly, there are different degrees among people who have the awe or fear of Allah in their hearts. Someone may have achieved its highest degree. Others may have arrived at what is less than that. Then, the whole thing depends on knowledge. Whoever has a certain degree of knowledge will have a corresponding degree of the awe or fear of Allah. (Rūḥ-ul-Maʿānī)

In previous verses, it was said: **إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يُخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ** (18) This is to give solace to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which means, 'when you warn people and convey the message of Allah to them, only those who have the awe of Allah without having seen Him get the maximum benefit out of it.' In symmetry with this, the present verse: **إِنَّمَا يُخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ** (Only those of His slaves fear Allah who are knowledgeable - 35:28) has mentioned people about whom it can be said that they have the awe of Allah and fear Him as is His due. Then, there is another parallelism here. Mentioned earlier were disbelievers and deniers along with the different states they were submerged in. In the present verse, what has been put forth is the opposite of it. The verse talks about the men of Allah (the auliya' of Allah) particularly. The word: **إِنَّمَا** (*innama*) is used in the Arabic language to describe *ḥaṣr* or exclusiveness. Therefore, this sentence obviously means that only the 'Ulama' (the knowing, the learned, the initiated) fear Allah or have the genuine awe of Allah. But Tafsīr authority, Ibn 'Atiyyah and others said that the way **إِنَّمَا** (*innama*) is employed to show exclusiveness, it is also used to describe the singularity of something, and the later is what is meant here - that fearing Allah and remaining in awe of Him is a specially incumbent attribute of the 'Ulama'. It does not necessarily imply that those other than them have no such fear and awe in them. (Al-Baḥr ul-Muḥīṭ, Abū Ḥayyān)

And the word: **عُلَمَاءُ** ('Ulama') in the verse means people who have due knowledge of the being and attributes of Allah Taʿālā and who have the fact of His power and control, and His favors and blessings, on what He has created, always in sight. In the terminology of the Qurʾān, no one is considered to be an '*alim* simply by virtue of knowing the Arabic

language, grammar and rhetoric unless he has acquired the knowledge and understanding of the attributes of Allah Ta'ālā in the manner stated above.

Explaining this verse, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'Alim is a person who fears Allah in private and in public, and likes what Allah likes him to do, and hates what is detestable in the sight of Allah.

And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه said:

لَيْسَ الْعِلْمُ بِكَثْرَةِ الْحَدِيثِ وَلَكِنَّ الْعِلْمَ عَنْ كَثْرَةِ الْخَشْيَةِ

Memorizing many aḥādīth (or, talking a lot) is no 'ilm (knowledge). Instead, (real) knowledge comes when one has the awe and fear of Allah with it.

In short, the degree of the fear of Allah one has shall go on to make him an 'Alim of that very degree. And Aḥmad Ibn Ṣaliḥ al-Miṣrī said: Fear of Allah cannot be recognized on the basis of someone's prolific reporting of events or abundance of knowledge, in fact, it is identified through one's adherence to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet. (Ibn Kathīr)

Shaykh Shahabuddīn as-Suhrawardī رحمه الله تعالى said: This verse clearly indicates that a person who has no fear of Allah is no 'alim. (Maḥzarī) This is confirmed by the sayings of the early forbears of Islam (Salaf).

Sayyidnā Rabi' Ibn Anas رضي الله عنه said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَخْشَ فَلَيْسَ بِعَالِمٍ

One who does not fear Allah is not an 'alim.

And early commentator, Mujāhid said:

إِنَّمَا الْعَالِمُ مَنْ خَشِيَ اللَّهَ

Only he who fears Allah is the (real) 'alim.

Someone asked Sa'd Ibn Ibrāhīm: Who knows Divine Law at its best in the city of Madīnah? He said: أَتَقَاهُمْ لِرَبِّهِ (He who is the most fearing of his Lord).

And Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtada رضي الله عنه defined a Faqīh (master of Islamic jurisprudence) by saying:

إِنَّ الْفَقِيهَ حَقَّ الْفَقِيهِ مَنْ لَمْ يَغْنَطِ النَّاسَ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ وَلَمْ يَرْخَصْ لَهُمْ فِي مَعَاصِي اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْتَهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَلَمْ يَدْعُ الْقُرْآنَ رَغْبَةً عَنْهُ إِلَى غَيْرِهِ أَنَّهُ لَأَخَيْرَ فِي عِبَادَةٍ لَأَعْلَمَ فِيهَا وَلَا عِلْمَ لَأَفْهَمَ فِيهِ وَلَا قِرَاءَةَ لَأَتَدَبَّرُ فِيهِ (قرطبي)

A Faqih, perfect as he must be, is he who would not make people lose hope in the mercy of Allah, nor leave them free to indulge in acts of disobedience to Him, nor give them the guarantee of remaining safe from the punishment of Allah, nor forsake the Qur'an by indulging in pursuits other than it. (And he said): Verily, there is no good in an act of worship that is without knowledge, and there is no good in a knowledge that is without understanding, and there is no recitation (Qira'ah of the Qur'an) without deliberation in it. (Qurṭubī)

The clarifications appearing above also help remove the doubt about many 'Ulama' who do not seem to have the kind of awe and fear of Allah required of them. These clarifications tell us that, in the sight of Allah, the bland knowledge of Arabic is not what 'ilm is, and certainly, the one who is proficient in it is not an 'Alim. Anyone who does not have the fear of Allah in his heart is simply not an 'Alim in the terminology of the Qur'an. However, at times, awe and fear of Allah are rooted in one's creed and reason because of which one adheres to the injunctions of the Shari'ah as a matter of obligation. Then, there are occasions when this awe and fear of Allah become the very state of one's existence and rise to the degree of a firmly ingrained asset whereby the readiness to follow the Shari'ah becomes a natural reflex. The first degree of the awe and fear of Allah is mandatory and, for an 'Alim, necessary. The second degree is certainly superior and sublime, but not necessary. (Bayān ul-Qur'an)

### Verses 29 - 37

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلاَنِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَنْ تَبُورَ ﴿٢٩﴾ لِيُؤْفِقَهُمْ أَجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣١﴾  
ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ

وَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ إِذِنَ اللَّهُ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ  
 الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٣٢﴾ جَنَّتٌ عَدْنٌ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ  
 مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا ۖ وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ  
 الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ الَّذِي أَحَلَّنَا  
 دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا نُصَبٌ وَلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ  
 ﴿٣٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ لَا يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوتُوا وَلَا  
 يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي كُلَّ كَافِرٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَهُمْ  
 يَصْطَرِخُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا  
 نَعْمَلُ ۗ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم مَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ ۗ  
 فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

Surely those who recite Allah's Book and have established salah and have spent, from what We have provided them, secretly and openly,--- they hope for a trade that will never crash, [29] so that He pays them their rewards in full, and gives them more out of His grace. Surely He is Most-Forgiving, Very- Appreciative. [30] And the Book We have revealed to you is the Truth, confirming what was (revealed ) before it. Surely Allah , in respect of His slaves, is All-Aware, All-Seeing. [31] Then We conveyed the Book as an heritage to those of Our slaves whom We chose. Then, some of them are those who wrong their own selves, and some of them are mediocre, and some of them are those who outpace (others) in righteous deeds with Allah's permission. That is the great bounty, [32] gardens of eternity they enter. They will be ornamented with bracelets of gold and with pearls, and their dress therein will be (of) silk. [33] And they will say, " Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us. Surely our Lord is Most-Forgiving, Very-Appreciative, [34] who, out of His grace, has made us land at a home of eternal living where neither we are touched by weariness, nor are we touched by boredom." [35] And those who disbelieve, for them shall be the fire of Jahannam; neither they will be

sentenced to death, so that they die, nor will its torment be lightened for them. It is in this way that We punish every infidel. [36] And they will be crying therein, " Our Lord, take us out from here, and we will act righteously, not in the way we have been doing before." (Allah will say to them,) " Did We not give you an age in your life in which lesson could have been learnt by the one who wished to take lesson? And (furthermore) the warner had (also) come to you. So, have a taste, because the wrongdoers will have no supporter. [37]

### Commentary

Mentioned earlier, in verse 28, there was a quality of true 'Ulama' who acknowledge Allah. This quality related to the heart. It was to have Allah's awe in the heart. In the first of the present verses (29), some those qualities of the same blessed people, the *awliya'* or men of Allah, are mentioned that find expression through outward parts of the body. Out of these, the first quality is the tilawah (recitation) of the Qur'ān. This denotes the people who recite the Book of Allah constantly. The use of the aorist tense (*mudari'*) in: يَتْلُونَ (*yatluna*: they recite) releases a hint in this direction. Then, there are other elders who have taken: يَتْلُونَ (*yatluna*) at this place in its literal sense, that is, they follow the Qur'ān in deed. But, the first Tafsīr is weightier, even though, it also stands determined from the context that recitation can be trustworthy only when it brings forth actions in accordance with the Qur'ān. But, the word: تِلَاوَاتٍ (*tilawah* or recitation) used here appears in its recognized sense. Similarly, Mutarrif Ibn 'Abdullāh Ibn Shikhkhir رحمه الله تعالى said: هَذِهِ آيَةُ الْقُرْآنِ (This verse is for al-qurra'), the phoneticians of the Qur'ān, who make the recitation of the Qur'ān their special activity of life.

The second quality they have is the establishing of Ṣalah and the third is the spending of their wealth in the way of Allah. When the text says 'secretly and openly', it indicates that it is often better to spend secretly in order to stay safe from *riya'* (show off) in acts of worship. But, there are occasions when religious considerations require that it should be done openly, as in the case of congregational prayers for which the command is to call adhan from minarets and perform salah openly with the highest possible attendance. Similarly, there are occasions when it is necessary to let spending in the way of Allah be open in order to persuade others to do the same. Muslim jurists have laid out details in the matter of

salah and spending in the way of Allah. According to them, when it is fard (obligatory), Wājib (necessary) or sunnah mu'akkadah (emphasized sunnah), doing this openly is better. Other than this, when doing *nafl* salah, it is better to do it privately. Similarly, in instances when spending one's wealth is Farḍ or Wājib, such as, the obligatory Zakāh or sadaqatul-fitr or qurbani, spending openly on these is better and worthy of more merit. As for the rest of voluntary charities (Ṣadaqatun-nāfilah), spending these secretly carries more merit and grace.

From people who carry these three qualities in their person, that is, they recite the Qur'ān constantly, establish salah as due and spend in the way of Allah cheerfully, it is also expected that they would not simply stop at Farḍ and Wājib spending, rather, would also be contributing to voluntary charities. Identified next, there is yet another attribute of theirs: *يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ* (they hope for a trade that will never crash,). The expression: *لَّن تَبُورَ* (*lan tabur*) is a derivation from: *بَوَارَ* (*bawar*) which means to go waste. The verse means that believers having these attributes hope to go in a trade that never runs into a loss. The very word: *يَرْجُونَ* (*yarjun*: hope) indicates that a believer has no room for certainty in any good deed done by him or her in this mortal world. No one can say it will definitely bring forgiveness to them and that they will get its reward for sure - because, no matter how good one is in deeds, one simply cannot fulfill the right of reverence and worship Allah Ta'ālā has on His servants. Therefore, forgiveness for one and all will not be possible without the grace of Allah Ta'ālā, as has been clearly stated in a Ḥadīth. In addition to that, with the doing of everything good, one should not neglect the danger of some secret trick of Satan or one's own self getting mixed up with so many good deeds because of which they do not remain acceptable. Or, on occasions, along with a good deed, some bad deed gets to be committed which in turn stops the good deed from being accepted. Therefore, by introducing the word: *يَرْجُونَ* (*yarjun*: hope) in the verse, it was pointed out that even after having become particular with all possible good deeds, no one has the right to become sure of his or her salvation and of high ranks that follow in its wake. The most one can do is hope. (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī)

### Good deeds likened with trade

In this verse, good deeds mentioned above have been likened to a

trading activity - as it was done in another verse where Faith and Jihād in the way of Allah have been expressed as trade or business deal:

هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ. تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ

O those who believe, shall I tell you about a trade that saves you from a painful punishment? (It is that) you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and carry out Jihād in His way with your riches and your lives - Aṣ-Ṣaff, 61:10).

It has been characterized as trade in the sense that a trader invests his capital and time in some venture only when he hopes that by doing so, his capital will increase and he will profit by it. But, every trading activity in this world is hemmed with the probability of loss along with the hope of profit. In the present verse, by adding the word: لَنْ تَبُورَ (lan tabur) to trade, it was pointed out that in this deal made for the sake of the benefits of the Hereafter, there was no probability of a loss. Then, the good people of Allah who take pains to do what is good and right do not go about running a business as businesses are commonly run. Instead of that, they hope to engage in a trading activity that never suffers a loss. As for the mention of the stance of hope on the part of such people, it serves as a delicate hint in the direction that Allah Ta'ālā is the noblest of the noble and the most generous of the generous, so He will not sever the hope of the hopeful, instead, would fulfill it. In fact, in the next sentence, it was also said that their hope is limited to receiving only a full return of their deed, but Allah Ta'ālā would, in His infinite mercy, bestow on them much more, far more than they would have ever hoped: يُؤْتِيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ (so that He pays them their rewards in full, and gives them more out of His grace - 30). The word: يُؤْتِيهِمْ (liyuwaffiahum: so that He pays them in full) is connected with: لَنْ تَبُورَ (lan tabur: has no loss), that is, this trade of theirs not only that it admits of no loss, but that it will also bring their return and reward in full, and in addition to that, Allah Ta'ālā will bless them, out of His grace, with much more, rather, far beyond their fondest hopes of returns.

Included within this grace and increase is the promise of Allah Ta'ālā that He rewards the deed of a believer multiplied many times, the lowest denominator of which could be ten times of the deed, and the highest could reach seven hundred times, even higher than that. Then, also



included in this grace is the acceptance of their intercession on behalf of sinners - as it appears in a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه where he has reported the explanation of this grace from the Holy Prophet ﷺ: 'These people will intercede on behalf of anyone who had done some favor to them during the life of the mortal world. Then, despite being deserving of the punishment of Jahannam, such people will stand delivered of it by virtue of their intercession.' (Tafsīr Maḥzarī with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥatim) (And it is obvious that intercession will be possible only for the people of faith. No one will be allowed to intercede on behalf of a disbeliever) Similarly, the foremost part of this grace is that they will have an opportunity to see Allah Ta'ālā

The word: ثُمَّ (*thumma*: Then) in verse 32: ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا (Then We conveyed the Book as an heritage to those of Our slaves whom We chose.) serves as a conjunction to denote that the two things mentioned before and after it, despite having common characteristic, are marked by precedence and succession. What comes first has precedence, and that which comes after, succeeds. In addition to that, on some occasions, this precedence and succession takes effect in terms of time while, on some others, in terms of rank and degree. In this verse, the word: ثُمَّ (*thumma*: Then) is عطف (*atf*: Conjunctive particle) connected to the word: أَوْحَيْنَا (*awḥaina*: We revealed). It means: This Book, that is, the Qur'ān which is nothing but the truth, and confirms all earlier Scriptures, We first sent to you as a revelation. After that, We made those We chose out of Our servants inherit the Book. The earlier and later of it, or the precedence and succession of it in terms of rank and degree is already very obvious in the sense that the sending of the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet ﷺ through the medium of wahy (revelation) has precedence in rank and degree. Then, its bestowal on the community of Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ takes effect in succession to it. And if making the Muslim ummah the inheritor of the Qur'ān is taken to mean that he ﷺ, rather than leave behind his legacy in the form of wealth and lands, left behind the Book of Allah as his legacy or inheritance - as borne by Ḥadīth: 'Prophets do not leave coins of gold and silver as inheritance: They leave (true) knowledge as their legacy.' Or, "'Ulama' are inheritors of prophets" - then, in those terms, this precedence and succession could also reflect a time frame in the sense that 'We have blessed you with this

Book. After that, you passed it on to your ummah as its inheritor.' To make someone inherit something means to bestow it on someone, give it as legacy, gift. This act of bestowal when expressed as inheritance points out to the fact that the way an inheritor gets his or her share from the inheritance without he or she having done anything to acquire it, similarly, this wealth of the noble Qur'ān has been given as a gift to these chosen servant without any effort on their part.

### A peculiarity of the Muslim Community, and that of its 'Ulama'

According to the majority of commentators, the sentence: *الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا* (those of Our slaves whom We chose) in verse 32, means the ummah (community) of Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ, its 'Ulama' - directly, and others, through the 'Ulama'. Reporting a Tafsīr of this verse from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭalḥah has said: The expression: *الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا* (those whom We chose) means the the ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. These are the people Allah Ta'ālā has made the inheritors of every Book He has revealed (that is, the Qur'ān, as being the Book that confirms and preserves all previous Scriptures, encompasses the contents of all revealed Books. Being its inheritor amounts to inheriting all revealed Books). Then he (Ibn 'Abbās) said: *فَظَالِمُهُمْ يُغْفَرُ لَهُ، وَمُقْتَصِدُهُمْ يُحَاسَبُ* *حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا وَسَابِقُهُمْ يُدْخِلُ الْجَنَّةَ بغيرِ حِسَابٍ* that is, even the unjust one from among them will be forgiven, and those who pursue a middle course among them will pass through a reckoning that is easy, while those who excel in good deeds will enter Jannah without reckoning. (Ibn Kathīr)

The word: *اصْطَفَيْنَا* (istafaina: We chose) used in this verse shows the great honor bestowed upon the Muslim ummah, because this word: *اصْطَفَاءٌ* (*istifa'*: to choose) has frequently appeared for prophets in the Holy Qur'ān as in: *اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ* (Allah chooses messengers from the angels and from men. - al-Ḥajj, 22:75) and in: *إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ* (Verily, Allah has chosen Ādam and Nūḥ and the House of Ibrāhīm and the House of 'Imrān over the worlds - Al-'Imrān, 3:33). In the verse under study, Allah Ta'ālā has put the Muslim ummah in line with the chosen ones, the prophets and the angels, although the degrees of such choice vary. The choice of prophets and angels occupies a higher degree, while the choice of the Muslim ummah, one that is posterior.

### Three kinds of the Muslim ummah

The sentence: *فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ* (Then, some of

them are those who wrong their own selves, and some of them are mediocre, and some of them are those who outpace (others) in righteous deeds with Allah's permission - 35:32) is virtually an explanation of the first sentence of the verse. In other words, it means that 'there are three kinds of Our servants We have chosen and have made them inherit the Qur'ān: (1) The unjust (2) The moderate (3) The excellent.

Imām Ibn Kathīr has explained these three kinds by saying: The one who wrong himself means a person who falls short in fulfilling some obligatory duties, and goes on to commit some of what is forbidden as well. And the one who follows the middle course is a person who fulfills all legally binding obligations and avoids everything forbidden, but on occasions, leaves out what has been recommended and falls into what is reprehensible. And excellent is the one who goes ahead of everyone in good deeds, fulfills all obligatory and recommended duties and avoids everything declared forbidden or considered reprehensible and goes on to leave what is allowed to him because of his devotion to acts of worship or because of some doubt in its lawfulness.

This is what Ibn Kathīr has said. Other commentators have reported many more sayings while explaining these three kinds. Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī mentions forty-three sayings with reference to at-Tahrir. But, on deliberation, the outcome of most is the same as stated with reference to Ibn Kathīr.

### A doubt and its answer

The explanation given above proves that الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا (those whom We chose) means the Muslim ummah that has three kinds and that its first kind - the unjust - is also included among the chosen servants of Allah. Taking this probability to be obviously remote, some people have said that this kind of people (who have wronged themselves) is excluded from the definition of: الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا (We chose) and from the Muslim ummah. But, it already stands proved from many authentic aḥādīth that each one of these three kinds relate to Muslim ummah and are not excluded from the characteristic of: الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا (We chose). In fact, this is the ultimate merit of the believing servants of the Muslim ummah that even those who are somewhat wanting in the matter of deeds are also sharers in this supreme distinction. At this place, Ibn Kathīr has put together all those Ḥadīth narrations, some of which are being cited below:

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said about these three kinds of: *الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا* (those We chose): 'They rank alike and alike they are in Jannah, all of them.' The expression 'being in one rank' means that all of them will be forgiven and all of them will go to Jannah - not that there will be no variance among them in terms of their ranks.

Then, there is a Ḥadīth reported from Sayyidnā Abū-d- Darda' رضي الله عنه which is supported by several chains of authorities. Ibn Kathīr has documented all of them. One of these has been reported by Ibn Jarir from Sayyidnā Abū Thabit رضي الله عنه who, when he went to the Masjid one of those days, found Sayyidnā Abū-d- Darda' رضي الله عنه already sitting there. Sayyidnā Abū Thabit went close, sat down by his side and started making a prayer: *اللَّهُمَّ اِنْسُ وَحْشَتِيْ وَارْحَمْ غُرْبَتِيْ وَيَسِّرْ لِيْ جَلِيْسًا صَالِحًا* ('O Allah, mollify the loneliness and anxiety of my heart, and have mercy on me in my state of homelessness, and make it easy on me by (sending) a good companion'). (At this point, it is worth recalling that the great emphasis was placed by the early forbears of Islam on the quest for a good companion. They took this need to be an important objective in life and considered it to be a cure of all anxieties, so much so that they would raise their hands of prayer before Allah and ask Him that they be blessed with one). When Sayyidnā Abū-d- Darda' رضي الله عنه heard this prayer, he said, 'If you are honest in your prayer (for a companion), then, I am more fortunate than you (in the sense that Allah blessed me with a good companion like yourself, on the spot, without asking). Then, he said, 'I relate to you a Ḥadīth I have heard from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But, since the time I heard it, I did not have the occasion to relate it before anyone. Here is the Ḥadīth: He mentioned this verse: *ثُمَّ اَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفَيْنَا* (Then We conveyed the Book as an heritage to those of Our slaves whom We chose - 32). Then, he said, 'As for those who race ahead of others in the matter of good deeds, out of the three kinds, they will go to Jannah without reckoning. And those who are in the middle will face an accounting that will be easy on them. And the unjust, the ones who fall short in deeds and are prone to slip into sins, will be overwhelmed with remorse at this juncture. After that, they too will be asked to enter Jannah and all their sorrows will stand removed from them.' It finds mention in the next verse: *وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ* (" Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us. Surely our Lord

is Most-Forgiving, Very-Appreciative,").

And at-Ṭabarānī reports from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'وَكُلُّهُمْ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ' It means that each of the three kinds will be from this very Ummah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

Abū Dāwūd at-Ṭayalisi reports from ‘Uqbah Ibn Ṣahban Hana’i that he asked the Tafsīr of this verse from Ummul-Mu’minin, Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها. She said, "My son, all these three kinds are to go to Paradise. Out of these, those who were ahead of everyone in good deeds were people who passed away during the period of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He himself testified that they are to go to Jannah. And those who took the middle course are people who followed the former as their role models to the extent that they joined up with them. As for those who have been unjust to themselves, they are people like me and you!"

Certainly great was the modesty of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها that she counted herself too as part of the third kind, that is, among those who are unjust to themselves - although, according to very clear statements in sound and authentic aḥādīth, she ranks high among the very first and foremost people (as-sabiqun al-awwalun) of early Islam.

And Ibn Jarīr has reported from Muḥammad Ibn-ul- Ḥanafiyyah رحمه الله تعالى who said, "This ummah is a community of people blessed with the mercy of Allah so en masse that even the unjust one in it stands forgiven, and the one of the middle course is in Jannah and the one way ahead in good deeds enjoys high ranks with Allah.'

And Sayyidnā Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī al-Bāqir رضي الله عنه, while explaining: ظَالِمٌ الَّذِي خَلَطَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا (ظالم لينافسيه), said: الَّذِي خَلَطَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا meaning: 'a person who mixes good and bad deeds.'

### The great merit of the ‘Ulama’ of the Muslim ummah

In this verse, Allah Ta‘ālā has said that He has made a particular people to become inheritors of His Book, people who are chosen and honored ones from among His servants. Then, it is also obvious that ‘Ulama’ are the direct inheritors of the knowledge relating to the Book of Allah and the mission of prophets, as it has also been stated in the Ḥadīth: الْعُلَمَاءُ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ ('Ulama’ inherit [the legacy of] prophets). In sum,

people who have been so blessed by Allah Ta'ālā that they engage in the pursuit of the fields of knowledge relating to the Qur'ān and Sunnah with unalloyed sincerity is, in itself, a sign of their being men of Allah worthy of the task. This is as it has been supported by a narration of Sayyidnā Tha'labah Ibn al-Hakam رضي الله عنه that reports the Holy Prophet ﷺ to have said, 'Allah Ta'ālā will address the 'Ulama' of the Muslim community on the Day of Judgment and say, "I had placed My knowledge and wisdom in your chests, for I had intended to forgive you irrespective of the nature of your actual deeds." (From the earlier presentation, it is already established that a person who has no awe and fear of Allah is simply not counted as one of the 'Ulama'. Therefore, this address will be to people for whom the awe and fear of Allah has become their natural reflex. Hence, it would be virtually impossible for them to indulge in sins carelessly. Yes, on occasions, they too could slip or make a mistake under the dictates of human temperament. This very aspect was alluded to in the Ḥadīth mentioned above where it was said - no matter the nature of your deeds, forgiveness is destined for you).

All these narrations have been taken from Ibn Kathīr. The last Ḥadīth reported from Sayyidnā Tha'labah رضي الله عنه has also been reported by at-Tabarani with all chains of authority cited by him being reliable. (Tafsīr Mazharī) And in Tafsīr Mazharī, the subject of the same Ḥadīth has been reported from Abū 'Umar San'ani with reference to Ibn 'Asakir. Similarly, according to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'On the Day of Resurrection (*al-maḥshar*), Allah Ta'ālā will gather all His servants together. Then, He will assemble the 'Ulama' from among them at a prominent place and will say to them:

إِنِّي لَمْ أَضِعْ عِلْمِي فِيكُمْ إِلَّا لَعَلَّمِي بِكُمْ وَلَمْ أَضِعْ عِلْمِي فِيكُمْ لِأَعَذِّبْكُمْ إِنِطَلَّفُوا قَدْ  
غَفَرْتُ لَكُمْ

I had placed My *ilm* in you since I knew you (that you will fulfill the due rights of this *ilm*, the knowledge given to you) and I had not placed My *ilm* in you so that I punish you. Go, I have forgiven you - Mazharī.

### Special Note

In this verse, mentioned first was the category of the unjust, then of those following the middle course, and finally, of those who are ahead in good deeds. The reason for this order may, perhaps, be that the number of

those unjust to them selves is larger, those following the middle course are less than them and those ahead in good deeds happen to be less than the later. Thus, those whose number was large were made to appear first.

A close look at the last sentence of verse 32 and the statement in verse 33: **ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ جَنَّتٌ عَدْنٌ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّلُونَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ** (That is the great bounty, gardens of eternity they enter. They will be ornamented with bracelets of gold and with pearls, and their dress therein will be (of) silk. - 35:32,33) shows that in the beginning of verse 32, Allah Ta'ālā has pointed out to three kinds of His chosen servants following which it was said: **ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ** : That is, 'this counting of all these three among His chosen servants is the great bounty.' Next comes the statement relating to their recompense - that they will go to Jannah, that they will be given bracelets of gold and ornaments of pearls to wear and that their dress shall be of silk.

For men, in this mortal world, it is haram to wear ornaments of gold, and dresses made of silk too. To compensate, they will have these in Jannah. Let there be no doubt about it, something like: Ornaments are for women, not for men in whose case these do not suit. The reason is simple. Taking the conditions prevailing in the 'Aakhirah (Hereafter) and Jannah (Paradise) on the analogy of conditions prevailing in the mortal world is unreasonable, even dumb.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'Crowns on the heads of the people of Jannah will be studded with pearls. Light emitted by the smallest of its pearls will fill the entire horizon from the East to the West.' (Reported by at-Tirmidhī and al-Ḥakīm, who has authenticated it, and by al-Baihaqī - from Maḥzarī)

Imām al-Qurṭubī said: Commentators explain that every inmate of Jannah will have bracelets to wear on their hands - of gold, silver, and pearls. About this celestial bracelet, a verse mentions 'of silver' (76:21) while others, 'of gold' (18:31; 22:23; 35:33; 43:53). The present explanation brings both verses in correspondence.

**A person who will use utensils of gold and silver and dresses of silk will remain deprived of these in Jannah**

Sayyidnā Hudhaifah رضي الله عنه says that he heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying, 'Do not wear dresses of silk and do not drink water in utensils of

gold and silver, nor use plates made of these in eating food - because, these things are for disbelievers in this world and for you, in the Hereafter.' (al-Bukhari and Muslim)

And Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'Any male who wore a dress made of silk in this world will not wear it in the Hereafter' (al-Bukhari and Muslim). And a narration of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه says, 'A male who wears a dress made of silk in this world will remain deprived of it in the Hereafter, even if he were to go to Jannah.' (Maḏharī)

The next verse (34): وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ (And they will say, "Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us.") tells us about what the people of Paradise will say when they enter Jannah. What does 'sorrow' mean at this place? Leading commentators have given various explanations about it. However, the truth of the matter is that all sorrows stand included therein. In this world, one may become a king or a prophet or a saint, yet no one can escape it:

دریں دنیا کسے بے غم نباشد.....☆.....وگر باشد بنی آدم نباشد

In this world, no one is free of sorrow  
And if one is, one is not a human being.

In this world of our experience, no one good or bad can get away from one or the other concern, anxiety or sorrow. Therefore, people of wisdom call this world a home of sorrows. The sorrow the removal of which this verse mentions includes all these mortal states of concern. The second concern is that of the Day of Judgment and Resurrection. The third concern is that of Reckoning of Deeds, and the fourth, that of the punishment of Jahannam. From the people of Jannah, Allah Ta'ālā will remove all these concerns, anxieties and sorrows.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'For the people who uphold the Kalimah of la ilaha il-lal-lah (there is no God but Allah), there is no fear and loneliness at the time of death, nor in the grave, nor when they rise again on the Day of Resurrection - as if I am virtually seeing them rise from their respective graves saying: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ (Praise be to Allah who has removed all sorrow from us.)'. (Reported by at-Ṭabarānī, Maḏharī)



At this point, let us refer back to the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Abū-D-Dardā رضي الله عنه that has appeared a little earlier. There it has been stated that it will be said by the unjust, those who have wronged their own selves. This is because they would initially face great anxiety on the plains of Resurrection but, finally, when they are asked to enter Paradise, it will stand removed. This statement does not contradict the Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه appearing immediately above. Again, the reason is that the person who has wronged himself would have an additional sorrow on his hands, more serious than that of others, on the plains of the Resurrection as well - something that will stand removed at the time of one's entry into the Paradise. In short, this is a statement that will be made by all people of Jannah, no matter to which kind they belong, to the ones who have been ahead of all in good deeds, or to those who have followed the middle course, or to those who have been unjust to their own selves. But, the thought of everyone's roster of sorrows being separate from each other is not too far out.

Imām Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ said: It is the typical state of a believer that he never remains free of concerns while in this world. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said that the world is a prison for the believer. This is the reason why it appears in the accounts of the lives of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his great Ṣaḥabah that these blessed souls used to look sad fairly often.

In verse 35: **الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ دَارَ الْمَقَامَةِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۖ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا نُصَبٌ وَلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ** (who, out of His grace, has made us land at a home of eternal living where neither we are touched by weariness, nor are we touched by boredom."), some characteristics of Jannah have been described: (1) That it is an eternal home with no danger of any lapse of time, or expulsion from there at any time. (2) That no one will face any sorrow while there. (3) That no one there will experience the least fatigue or boredom, as it happens in the mortal world where one needs to sleep after work. Life in Jannah will be free from this too. This subject also finds mention in some narrations of Ḥadīth. (Maḥzarī)

When the people in Jahannam will plead with their Lord that they be delivered from its punishment, so that they could do good deeds then, and not do the bad ones they did earlier, at that time they will be told: **أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم مَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ** ("Did We not give you an age in your life in which lesson could have been learnt by the one who wished to take

lesson - 37) Sayyidnā 'Alī Ibn Ḥusain Zain ul-'Abidīn عليه السلام said, "It means the age of seventeen years." And Qatadah رحمه الله تعالى gave the age as eighteen years, meaning thereby the age of puberty. And the difference of seventeen and eighteen is possible in determining the age of puberty, as someone may reach puberty at the age of seventeen and someone else at, eighteen. In the Shari'ah, the age of puberty is the first line of demarcation after having crossed which a person is Divinely blessed with enough reason, so that one can understand what is good or bad in his or her case. Therefore, this address will be to disbelievers at large irrespective of their ages being long or short. However, the one who had a long lease of life, yet did not come to his senses, saw all sorts of physical proofs scattered around and heard the teachings of the prophets, still did not recognize the truth - so then, this one will be more blameworthy.

In short, the person who saw nothing beyond the age of puberty, he too was given enough power of discrimination by nature that he could have used to distinguish between the true and the false. When he failed to do that, he too is deserving of censure and punishment. But, the person who was given long years to live, the warning of Allah stood served against him in a more conclusive degree. Then, if he could still not shake off his disbelief and disobedience, he would be more deserving of punishment and blame.

Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtada عليه السلام said, 'The age whereupon Allah Ta'ālā has asked His sinning servants to beware is that of sixty years.' Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās عليه السلام, according to one narration, has given it as forty years while, according to another narration, as sixty. He has said that this is the age when the argument and warrant of Allah stands served conclusively on an erring person who, then, is left with no room for making excuses. Ibn Kathīr has given preference to the second Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās عليه السلام.

From the presentation made above, it is clear that there is no contradiction in the narrations pointing out to the age of seventeen / eighteen and sixty. Though, someone at the age of seventeen/eighteen is able to distinguish between the true and the false. Therefore, one has been obligated with precepts of the Shari'ah from this benchmark this very age of puberty. But, the age of sixty is such a long period of time that, should one still fail to recognize the truth, there remains no room for

making any more excuses. Against such a person, the argument of Allah stands firmly established. Therefore, the aggregate ages of people in this blessed ummah are destined to be between sixty and seventy years - as said in Ḥadīth:

أَعْمَارُ أُمَّتِي مَا بَيْنَ السِّتِينَ إِلَى السَّبْعِينَ وَأَقْلَهُمْ مَن يَجُوزُ ذَلِكَ

The ages of my ummah will be in between sixty and seventy and there will be few of those who will exceed that - reported by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, Ibn Kathīr.

Towards the end of the verse (37), it was said: وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ (And (furthermore) the warner had (also) come to you.). Given here is a hint that Allah Ta'ālā gives one from the age one attains puberty enough ability to rationalize and recognize at least his or her creator and master and then goes on to live a life the purpose of which is to seek His pleasure. To do only this much, human reason alone would have been sufficient. But, Allah Ta'ālā did not leave it simply at that. In fact, He sent His special people called: نَذِيرٌ (*nadhīr*) to help them reason it out. This word is usually translated as 'one who warns' or 'warner' in English (the later, though, not formally admissible in the language, but is still used in the absence of a suitable equivalent). In fact, a *nadhīr* is a person who, by virtue of his mercy and compassion, asks his people to stay away from things that are likely to bring harm to them or cause their total ruination as a people and tries to instill the fear of such things in their hearts, lest it actually happens. In terms of its well-recognized meaning, it refers to the noble prophets عليهما السلام, and to the 'Ulama' who carry out their mission as their deputies. The outcome of the verse is: 'We gave them reason to recognize the true from the false. Along with it, We also sent Our prophets who would guide them on the path of truth and keep them safe from the false.'

And it has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'Krimah رضي الله عنه and Imām Ja'far Bāqir that *nadhīr* means the gray hair of the old age. When they flare up, they give a message to human beings: Here comes the time to go! This statement too is not contradictory to the first one for gray hair might as well serve as the standard bearers of warning along with Anbiya' and 'Ulama'.

And the truth of the matter is that all conditions faced by human

beings after their age of puberty and all minor and major changes that take place in their persons and in that they are surrounded with are, all of them, heralds of warning for human beings.

## Verse 38 - 41

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ غَيْبِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٣٨﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ ۗ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرُهُمْ إِلَّا مَقْتًا ۗ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرُهُمْ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٣٩﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءُكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۗ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ ۗ أَمْ آتَيْنَهُمْ كِتَابًا فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْهُ ۗ بَلْ إِنْ يَعِدُ الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿٤٠﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمَسِّكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا ۗ وَلَئِن زَالَتَا إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴿٤١﴾

Surely Allah is the Knower of the unseen in the heavens and the earth. Indeed He fully knows what lies in the hearts. [38]

He is the One who has made you successors (of the past generations) in the earth. So the one who becomes infidel, his infidelity will go against himself. And their infidelity adds nothing to the infidels but anger with their Lord, and their infidelity adds nothing to the infidels but loss. [39] Say, "Tell me about your (presumed) co-gods whom you invoke beside Allah. Show me that part of the earth that they have created, or do they have a share in the (creation) of the heavens? " Or have We given them a book so that they are upon a clear proof from it? No, but the wrongdoers promise one another nothing but delusion. [40] Undoubtedly, Allah holds back the heavens and the earth from leaving their existing state, and if they were to leave, there is none who can hold them back, except Him. Surely He is Forbearing, Most-Forgiving. [41]

### Commentary

The word: خَلَائِفَ (khalā'if) in verse 39: هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ (He is the One who has made you successors (of the past generations) in the earth.) is the plural of: خَلِيفَةَ (khalifah) which means deputy or vice-regent. The general sense is that Allah Ta'ālā has let human beings have lands and houses that keep passing on from one to the other. In this phenomena, there is a great lesson - turn to Allah. Then, the statement could also be taken to have been addressed to the ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying, 'After past communities, We made you take their place with authority to make life better around you, so it is your duty that you learn your lesson from what happened to people earlier than you, and hence you, on your part, do not while away precious moments of your life in negligence.'

In the expression: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمَسِّكُ السَّمَوَاتِ (Undoubtedly, Allah holds back the heavens and the earth - 35:41), the 'holding' of the heavens or the skies does not mean that their movement was stopped. Instead, it means holding them from moving askance - as the word: أَنْ تَزُولَا (an tazula: from leaving their existing state,) bears it out. Therefore, in this verse, there exists no supporting evidence on either side as to the skies move or they are static.

### Verses 42 - 45

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ لَّيَكُونُنَّ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْ  
 إِحْدَى الْأُمَمِ ۗ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ مَّا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا ﴿٤٢﴾ ۖ اِسْتَكْبَارًا  
 فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرًا لِّسِيءٍ ۗ وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ ۗ  
 فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا سُنَّتَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۗ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ۗ  
 وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٤٣﴾ ۖ أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ  
 فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَكَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ۗ  
 وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّهٗ  
 كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا ﴿٤٤﴾ ۖ وَلَوْ يُوَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ

عَلَى ظَهْرِهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ  
 أَجْلُهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ بَصِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾

And they had sworn forceful oaths that if a warner would come to them, they would be more receptive to guidance than any other community. But when a warner came to them, it added nothing to them but aversion, [42] because of their showing arrogance in the land and plotting of evil. And the evil plot envelops none but its own people ( who make it ). So, they are looking for nothing but the (divine) practice with the earlier people. So you will never find in Allah's practice any change, and you will never find in Allah's practice any diversion. [43] Did they not travel in the land and see how was the end of those before them ? And they were stronger than these in power. And Allah is not such that something in the heavens or the earth can frustrate Him. Surely He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful. [44] And if Allah were to take mankind to task for what they did, He would have not left a living creature on its back, but He delays them upto an appointed time. So when their time will come, then Allah is the One who will see His slaves. [45]

### Commentary

The word: *لَا يَحِيطُ* (*lā yahīṭ*) in verse 43: *وَلَا يَحِيطُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ* (And the evil plot envelops none but its own people ( who make it ) carries the sense of: *لَا يُحِيطُ* (*lā yuḥīṭ*: does not surround) or: *لَا يُصِيبُ* (*lā uṣīb*: does not afflict). Thus, it comes to mean that the curse of making an evil plan falls on none but the one who makes it. In other words, a person who wishes evil for others, he himself falls a victim to it.

A doubt may arise at this point. It is commonly seen in this worldly life that someone with an evil plan gets away with it and the loss intended for anyone stands inflicted on him. The answer to this has been given by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi by saying that the pain or loss inflicted on such a person was a loss limited to this mortal world, while the loss to be the fate of the maker of such evil plan in the Hereafter was not only heavier, but was more lasting too. So, if compared, his worldly loss amounts to nothing.

There is another answer given by some elders who say that there are

occasions when the curse of contriving against someone innocent or inflicting injustice on him, more than often, falls on the person causing it, right here in this world as well. Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi said: There are three things the doer of which does not remain safe against its curse and punishment even in this world. These are: (1) Causing harm or pain to some innocent person by engineering evil against him. (2) Inflicting any injustice. (3) Breaking of pledge. (Ibn Kathīr) Particularly so, when things like that are done against a person who is helpless or does not have the power to avenge or elects to endure despite having that power. Experience bears out that no one who does things like that has ever remained unaffected by the curse of injustice thus inflicted even in this world. Hence, the outcome will be that the element of restriction (Ḥasr) visible here appears in terms of a majority rule and not in any absolute sense. Allah knows best.

**Alhamdulillah**  
**The Commentary on**  
**Sūrah Faṭīr**  
**Ends here**